

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LUANDA 00887 161316Z

43

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 DRC-01 /059 W

----- 008475

R 161129Z OCT 74

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2997

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 887

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI AO

SUBJ: FNLA STRENGTHENS ITS POLITICAL POSITION

REF: LUANDA 833

1. SUMMARY. SINCE EARLY SEPTEMBER FNLA'S STATURE AND FORTUNES IN ANGOLA HAVE MARKEDLY IMPROVED CLIMAXING WITH THE FORMAL "CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES" OCT. 15. EVEN BEFORE THE CEASE FIRE FNLA WAS PERMITTED BY THE ARMY TO ENTER SOME TOWNS TO PROSELYTIZE. FNLA SEEMS INTENT ON DESTROYING THE WHITE ECONOMY IN THE NORTH BY FORCING BLACK CONTRACT LABORERS FROM SOUTHERN ANGOLA WHO ARE WORKING IN THE NORTH TO FLEE THEIR JOBS. WHITES IN LUANDA PROFESS A SOMEWHAT MORE SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARD FNLA AS THE RESULT OF A SERIES OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES FAVORABLE TO FNLA, BUT SOUTHERN WHITES REMAIN FEARFUL. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE PAST SIX WEEKS THE KINSHASA-BASED FNLA HAS MADE IMPRESSIVE POLITICAL AND MILITARY GAINS WITHIN ANGOLA. ALWAYS THE STRONGEST MILITARY FORCE AMONG THE LIBERATION GROUPS AND THE ONE LOCATED CLOSEST TO LUANDA, FNLA HAS LONG BEEN STIGMATIZED BY THE MEMORY OF THE BLODDY MASSACRES IT PERPETUATED AGAINST

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PAGE 02 LUANDA 00887 161316Z

WHITES, SOUTHERN BLACKS AND PARTICULARLY BAILUNDOS DURING ITS

UNSUCCESSFUL UPRISING OF MARCH, 1961. ITS ONLY INTERNAL SUPPORT CAME FROM THE BAKONGO TRIBE OF NORTHERN ANGOLA. LIBERAL WHITES WHO FAVORED INDEPENDENCE ALWAYS PREFERRED THE MORE LEFTIST, INTELLECTUAL MPLA OF AGOSTINHO NETO TO HOLDEN ROBERTO. THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS PREVAILED EVEN AFTER THE APRIL COUP IN LISBON, WHEN FNLA STUCK TO A HARD LINE ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH PORTUGAL. ONLY AFTER IT BECAME APPARENT THAT MPLA WAS HOPELESSLY SPLIT DID LOCAL THINKING TURN TOWARD FNLA. DISCREET APPROACHES FROM LISBON TO KINSHASA WERE APPARENTLY WELL RECEIVED AND SOME ANGOLAN JOURNALISTS WERE PERMITTED TO TRAVEL TO KINSHASA IN LATE AUGUST. THE COMBINATION OF SPINOLA'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU AND THE PUBLICATION RECENTLY OF THE SYMPATHETIC ARTICLES ON FNLA PROVED TO BE A FORTUITOUS CONVERGENCE OF DEVELOPMENTS FOR FNLA.

3. IN THE WEEKS BEFORE THE OFFICIAL CEASE FIRE FNLA CADRES HAD BEEN ALLOWED INTO SEVERAL TOWNS IN THE NORTH TO TALK WITH WHITES AND BLACKS. THEY HAD ALSO BEEN ALLOWED TO SPEAK WITH THE BAILUNDO CONTRACT LABORERS WHO MAKE UP NEARLY THE ENTIRE LABOR FORCE ON THE COFFEE AND SISAL FARMS IN THE NORTH. THROUGH A COMBINATION OF THREATS AND PERSUASION THE BAILUNDOS HAVE DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE SOUTH NOW, AND ARE DOING SO BY THE THOUSANDS. THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IS ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE TRUCK TRANSPORT AND ENCOURAGING WHITE GROWERS NOT TO INVOKE A CONTRACT CLAUSE WHICH REQUIRES CONTRACT LABORERS TO PAY A PENALTY OF FIVE DAYS WAGES FOR EACH MONTH OF THE CONTRACT THEY FAIL TO FULLFIL. AN FNLA COMMANDER IN THE SONGO AREA TOLD A LUANDA NEWSMAN THAT EXPULSION OF THE BAILUNDO LABORERS IS NECESSARY TO BRING A HALT TO THE COLONIAL ECONOMY IN THE NORTH AND HASTEN AN END TO PORTUGUESE DOMINATION. HE SAID WHITES COULD KEEP SOME OF THEIR LANDS AFTER INDEPENDENCE BUT WOULD HAVE TO WORK IT THEMSELVES.

4. DESPITE PLEAS BY WHITE FARMERS AND MERCHANTS IN THE NORTH THE PORTUGUESE ARMY DID NOTHING TO STOP THE FNLA. A RELIABLE LUANDA SOURCE IN THE HIGH COMMAND TOLD A CONGEN OFFICER THAT AS LONG AS FNLA REMAINS PEACEFUL AND HONORS THE CEASE FIRE IT CAN MOVE ABOUT FREELY.

5. FNLA HADN'T COMPLETELY SHAKEN OFF ITS OLD HABITS HOWEVER. IN EARLY OCTOBER ITS TROOPS AMBUSHED AND KILLED 11 BAILUNDO COFFEEWORKERS, AND ONE WHITE SUPERVISOR, NEAR QUITEXE, PROBABLY
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PAGE 03 LUANDA 00887 161316Z

AS AN EXAMPLE TO THE BAILUNDOS THAT THEY MUST CEASE WORKING AND LEAVE.

6. THE REACTION AMONG LUANDA'S WHITE POPULATION TO THE MIND-OPENING SERIES OF NEWS STORIES ON FNLA HAS BEEN GENERALLY FAVORABLE. (ALTHOUGH MANY WHITES IN THE SOUTH ARE STILL CONVINCED THAT FNLA IS A GANG OF CUTTHROATS.) FNLA IS NO LONGER SEEN HERE AS A RAG-TAG HANDFUL OF MURDERERS BUT AS A SERIOUS POLITICAL OR-

GANIZATION THAT ESPOUSES A MODERATE PLATFORM AND SHOWS SIGNS
OF BEING AMENABLE TO COMPROMISE. THAT FNLA ACCEPTS THE REALITY
OF WHITE PRESENCE IN ANGOLA IS DEMONSTRATED BY THE VISIT OF
ANGOLA'S UBIQUITOUS FERNANDO FALCAO TO KINSHASA IN EARLY OCTOBER.
ALTHOUGH FALCAO PUBLICLY DENIES MEETING MOBUTU AND ROBERTO AND
INSISTS THE TRIP WAS ALL BUSINESS, WE HAVE BEEN RELIABLY
INFORMED THAT HE DID SEE MOBUTU BUT THAT FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS
REASONS MOBUTU DOES NOT WANT IT KNOWN.
KILLORAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARAMILITARY FORCES, MILITARY EQUIPMENT, LIMITATION OF HOSTILITIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LUANDA00887
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740294-0488
From: LUANDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741044/aaaabljo.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LUANDA 833
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FNLA STRENGTHENS ITS POLITICAL POSITION
TAGS: PINT, PINS, MILI, AO, FNLA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005